

Words To Letters

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Summary: Arthur receives a letter, and finds another. Memories are the worst pain, but sometimes they also bring the greatest joys.
(Character death)

Words To Letters

"There is no flag large enough to cover the shame of killing innocent people."

Howard Zinn

It was so wrong, how it was simple to take a couple of words, throw them in a carefully arranged order, and break someone's heart. And Arthur knew this only too well, he knew this too well - more than he wanted to admit, more than he would ever be able to admit. And when his world came crashing down because of two sentences strung together, he began hating the words he had loved for his entire life.

He used to think words were beautiful - they were magic, they were pure, they were simple but they created complexity, they were so malleable and easy to mould, and they glinted more than gold in the sun, they changed lives, they spoke the simplest thoughts and conveyed the purest feelings of men.

Now, they had become something to fear, something that could be warped into cold, cold sentences of empty emotion, into a weapon that would hurt their recipient more than a bullet or a knife would, but leaving no trace to see, no trace to find and heal. They were the invisible, undercover weapon that was used against mankind without their knowledge, the ultimate power.

But he felt so powerless. Helpless. Useless. Shattered, hurt, torn apart, broken.

"The Secretary of the Army has asked me to express his deep regret that Flight Lieutenant Alfred Fitzgerald Jones was shot down over Tamakh, Syria on October 10th, 2015 and has been reported dead from wounds suffered in the crash."

He stared at the piece of paper crumpled in his hand, his fingers tightening their hold on the letter as his mind slowly understood the words he couldn't - he refused - to understand, the words he hate to see, loathed to read - he hadn't, this was not true, it couldn't be. There was simply no way that the words he had read could be true. He glanced at the other letter that was lying open on the bed. It wasn't possible. The letter was one he had received from Alfred, his Alfred, who was alive and well, on the previous day, and it couldn't be

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Arthur choked slightly. How could it be that on one day Alfred was telling him about the heat, the sand, complaining about the food, and making silly jokes about how it was even worse than Arthur's, but the next day he had gone, he was not there anymore, but laying somewhere, alone, abandoned, thousand of miles from Arthur? How could it? How could he believe it? It wasn't possible, it wasn't, it couldn't be!

Alfred had promised he would be home for Christmas. He had made such a big deal about it, he had sworn and promised to every power upon the planet that he would make it home for the holiday - Alfred's favourite holiday.

"I'll kick their asses and come back home right on time for Christmas dinner, you'll see."

Arthur so wanted to believe that, he so wished it were true, but the hope was slowly slipping from his grasp, like trying to hold onto this white mist of belief, that was slowly fleeting away as reality suddenly tore his heart, hurt his mind, and destroyed the hope piece by piece.

"And Arthur...?"

Arthur could still remember the blue eyes that shone so bright against the sun. He remembered the hair that flew in the wind as it was mussed and messed with. He recalled the smile worth more than could be described by words. He could see the tall, lean figure, standing so proudly but moving so clumsily, the silly things he said, the lovable things he did. It was all Alfred, and he just couldn't believe it was all gone, it just wasn't right.

"If anything... happens, to me - no, listen, it can happen. We both know it."

They had both known it could happen, Alfred had been telling him this so many times, and Arthur had tried to keep it out of his mind. But somewhere, they both knew it could and could very much happen. He just couldn't believe it. He stared at the bedside table in front of him as he recalled his lover's words, that seemed so many years ago. It already felt like an eternity since Arthur had not felt this alone.

"I want you to do one thing. In my bedside table, second drawer, there's two things. One's a box, the other's an envelope. Read the

envelope first. And when you open the box, I don't want you to hurt, I don't want you to blame yourself or anyone else. Just... think of me, read it, and... just promise me that"__

Arthur had laughed a weak laugh. __"You sound like you're dying. You're just... you're just going to war for a few months, and you'll - you will return." __Green eyes had met electric blue ones. __"And if you don't, I'll have to kick your ass. But... I - yeah, I promise."__

Arthur recalled the laughter, the loud, beautiful, ringing and resounding laughter, like there was nothing else in the world, a bell of happiness. He opened the drawer, and there was an envelope and a small box. He reached for the envelope with trembling hands.

__'Arthur,__

__I honestly couldn't think of how to begin this letter. I had to start from scratch about five hundred times because I didn't know what to say and now I realised that starting like this is stupid because I'm rambling, and - I'll stop rambling. I only do that when I'm nervous, you know that. And I know that if you ever read this letter, well, it's because something's happened to me. And then that means I won't make it home for Christmas.'__

Arthur had to try hard to quench the tears that were threatening to spill, the ones that would blur his eyesight from seeing the rest of what Alfred, his beloved Alfred had written.

__'I know I promised, and I hate to be a liar on my last moments. But I can guarantee that what I will have thought of last, before the inevitable, was of you. I don't even need to be there now to know that it's true.'__

Arthur wiped his eyes. It was too much, too soon, but he still continued. He needed to know.

__'Arthur, in all my life, there's been people who came and went, and being in the Army and going to war, I've had that more than anyone. I've seen people die and be in agony, and I know how it hurts. I just can't imagine how much pain you must be in, because I never loved the friends I had the way I love you, and no doubt, how you love me. If it were me, I'd be looking to kill the bastard who did that to you.'__

Arthur smiled sadly, a strained chuckle coughed from his throat, but it came out like a sob. It was so much like Alfred himself.

__'Don't do that, please, because whoever did kill me, they'll have some fun time burning in Hell. But because I'm not there, and I can't hold you, and I can't tell you this myself, this letter will have to do.'__

__Arthur, I love you - more than words can say or describe or paintings show or music sing. I've loved you for such a long time, and I tried to put this off for after the war. But because it seems it's not ending anytime soon, and it keeps becoming longer and longer, I couldn't. I can't live without you, I can't live without knowing that you're mine, and mine only. And though I know that you

feel the same, and that we swore I'd be yours and you'd be mine forever, I just want you to have something to remember me by. I was planning on doing this at Christmas, but because you're reading this letter, it means I won't be able to.' _

Arthur choked slightly, not being able to hold it for much longer. He could get through this letter, this one letter, for Alfred.

_ 'The box was meant to be your Christmas present. It was meant to be in my hand as I get down on one knee on Christmas morning and ask you to marry me. I love you, Arthur Kirkland, and I want you to know that for as long as you live. And while I won't be able to be there, to hold you and comfort you when you'll be hurt over me, believe me that if I ever had a chance of coming back to you even if it meant selling my soul - I'd do it in the blink of an eye. I don't care how clichÃ© all of this has sounded, but it's all true. I know I won't be there, in sickness and in health, for better or for worse, because I'm gone, and I know I won't be there to see you happy or ever see you cry again, but you are most precious, beautiful and wonderful thing that has ever happened to me._

_ But Arthur, as much as this letter's been sad and totally un-heroic, because I cried over it (I didn't tell you this), I want you to keep living your life. I don't want you to become holed up in our house, but while I don't expect you to go out and be a social butterfly - which you never were and never will be - just keep living your life. You know how I'm always living at my fullest, so please, do that for me. _

_ That's all I ask, Arthur._

_ Your hero, forever, _

_ Alfred.' _

Arthur let the tears stream freely down his cheeks, all the pain and the hurt releasing into the small, crystal-clear droplets. He reached for the small, black box, and knowing already what was in it didn't make it hurt any less, didn't help to relieve any pain or make the surprise any smaller. He still found himself falling more and more in love with Alfred, and he knew that even though now, he couldn't see himself getting up from the bed, wipe his eyes and get outside, he could only believe that once he did, he would be so madly in love with Alfred that the pain wouldn't matter anymore. Because now, as he looked at the glimmering titanium band, he knew that nothing else mattered as long as Alfred had loved him, and he had loved - and still would love - the one person that had ever mattered to him. Alfred had truly been his hero, and it didn't matter where he was, he always would be.

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><p>AN: **Here is just a small piece about an idea that has been in my head for ages, and I could not leave it unwritten. I write because if I leave it to myself, it would just bug me until I'd have no choice but to write it. I've seen a lot of things that gave me the idea for this, combining and joining to this little piece of writing. And even though usually, my inspiration comes from a song, or a picture, or a quote, or sometimes even a film, this one was a combination, and I think it turned out all right, even though at

first I wasn't really sure where this was going. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I enjoyed writing it. The idea seems perhaps a bit clichÃ©d to me in and of itself, but who doesn't like a romantic clichÃ© once in a while?

End
file.